

Office of Congressman Charles W. Dent
Proudly Representing Pennsylvania's 15th District



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Supreme Court rejects 'reservation shopping' in 15th District; Rep. Dent praises decision

U.S. Rep. Charlie Dent (PA-15) today praised the United States Supreme Court's decision not to hear an appeal by an Indian tribe that tried to take land from homeowners and businesses in the 15th District to build a casino.

The Oklahoma-based Delaware Nation filed suit in 2004 in an effort to claim more than 300 acres of land in Forks Township, Northampton County. The Delaware tribe is not recognized in Pennsylvania and has no contiguous reservations in the state. The U.S. District Court of Eastern Pennsylvania already dismissed the claim and the U.S. Court of Appeals in the Third District upheld the decision. The Supreme Court's refusal to hear the case means the lower court's decision is upheld.

"I am pleased with this decision on behalf of the rightful property owners and I will continue to oppose this type of 'reservation shopping' by casino developers," Congressman Dent said. "The bottom line is that the intent of the Delaware Nation tribes was not to preserve tribal culture or heritage in the Lehigh Valley. Their intent was simply to establish a casino. In that effort the tribes have failed and for that I'm grateful.

"Off-reservation tribal gambling has expanded at a furious pace in this country, and this policy of unbridled expansion needs to be re-examined. These tribal gambling interests have vast financial resources and have

exercised undue influence in Washington. This is why I authored HR 3431, the Limitation of Tribal Gambling to Existing Tribal Lands Act of 2005. This bill would have done away with Section 20 of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), which provides that certain lands within the control of a tribe can be taken into trust by the federal government for the purposes of establishing a gambling facility on those lands. I also supported and voted for HR 4893, a bill to end the establishment of off-reservation gambling facilities that are not contiguous to an existing reservation.

“I will continue to push for the curtailment of off-reservation gambling facilities as long as casino interests misuse Indian tribal laws to threaten innocent homeowners with expensive lawsuits.”

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